

Aaron K. Stauffer
Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow
Interim Director of Lifelong Learning Program
Vanderbilt University Divinity School
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Education

- 2020 PhD in Theology and Ethics: Christian Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary; Advisor: Dr. Gary Dorrien.
- Dissertation Title: “Organizing Lived Religious Practices for Power: Sacred Value in Broad-Based Community Organizing.”
- Dissertation Committee: Gary Dorrien (Chair, Union Theological Seminary), Eric Gregory (Princeton), Melissa Snarr (Vanderbilt Divinity School), Andrea White (Union Theological Seminary).
- 2018 M.Phil.: Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Gary Dorrien, Advisor.
Comprehensive Examinations: “Personality & Property in the thought of St. Augustine, John Locke, & Ida B. Wells-Barnett,” “Anti-racist and Feminist Methodology in Religious & Cultural Criticism,” “Religious Identity and Difference in models of Interfaith Organizing,” “A Mortal, Imperfect Eschatology: The Theology of Karl Barth & Paul Tillich”
- 2014 MDiv in Interreligious and Ecumenical Studies: Union Theological Seminary
Thesis (with Distinction): “Re-Enchantment and Dissent: Religion and Race in the Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Baldwin.” Readers: Dr. Gary Dorrien, Dr. James Cone.
- 2010 BA, with Distinction, Religion: St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota
Religion Distinction Project: “Cosmology and Ethos in the Quechua Struggle for Self-Determination.”

Research and Teaching Interests

Christian social ethics, political and democratic theory, political theology, community organizing, early modern political philosophy, religion and politics, interfaith and ecumenical studies.

Awards and Scholarships

- 2020-2022 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Louisville Institute
2019 Fellow in Residence, Sewanee University School of Theology
2016-18 Doctoral Fellowship, Louisville Institute
2015 - 2019 Graduate Fellowship, Union Theological Seminary
2014 Charles A. Briggs Award, Union Theological Seminary
2012-14 Scholarship and Fellow, The Roothbert Fund, Inc.
2006-2010 St. Olaf College Service Leadership in Community and Church Award

Teaching, Research, and Editorial Experience

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

Positions Held:

August 2020 - Present *Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow*, Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice at Vanderbilt University Divinity School

Courses Taught:

Spring 2022 DIV/REL 7119: "Models of Interfaith Engagement" with Melissa Snarr
Fall 2021 DIV 0006 - 001 "Organizing Church" a Lifelong Learning Course
Fall 2021 DIV/REL 6807: "Suffering, Politics, and Liberation" with Bruce T. Morrill, S.J.

Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

2017-2020 Philosophy 2200: "Religion and the World," *Adjunct Professor*
2018 Philosophy 3300: "Western Religions," *Adjunct Professor*

Belmont University, Nashville TN

Fall 2017 Honors 1517: "World Traditions of Faith and Reason," *Adjunct Professor*
Fall 2018 Religion 1010: "Understanding the Bible," *Adjunct Professor*

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Fall 2016 CE 236: "American Theological Liberalism 1805 - 1930," *Teaching Assistant*
Spring 2017 CE 316: "Economy, Ecology and Ecofeminism," *Teaching Assistant*

Research Assistant

Aug. 2016 - Nov. 2018 Assistant to the chairs of Black Theology Group of the American Academy of Religion

Aug. 2016 - Aug 2018 Research Assistant for Dr. Andrea White, Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

January - Aug. 2017 Research Assistant for Dr. Lisa Thompson, Assistant Professor of Homiletics Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Editorial Support and Indexing

Editorial Assistant and Indexing - *Faith, Class, and Labor: Intersectional Approaches in a Global Context*. eds. Jin Young Choi and Joerg Rieger. Wipf and Stock Publishers as part of their Intersectionality and Theology Series.

Editorial and Bibliographic Support - *Preaching the Headlines: Pitfalls and Possibilities of Attending to the Times* by Lisa Thompson, Fortress Press.

Editor for a number of *Syndicate Theology* symposiums and a *Political Theology* round table discussion.

Selected Publications, Presentations, and Lectures

Peer Reviewed Publications:

Forthcoming "Religion and Socialism" with Joerg Rieger in *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Economic Ethics*, ed. Albino Barrera and Roy Amore, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- 2021 “Radical Democracy and Sacred Values” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* Vol. 42. Is. 2.
- 2021 “The Relational Meeting as a Political and Religious Practice,” *Political Theology* <https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2021.1899704>

Conference Presentations:

- 2021 “The Church as a Freedom-House: The Political Ecclesiology of George Washington Woodbey” at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November.
- 2020 “The Politics of Sacred Value in Broad-based Community Organizing” at Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting, January.
- 2019 “Our Last Best Chance?: Harry Ward's Radical Social Gospel, Liberal Theology and Soviet Communism” at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November.
- 2019 “Feminist and Anti-Racist Accounts of Sacred Value,” at International PhD Seminar: *Religion and Activism*, November.
- 2019 “Deweyan Radical Democracy and Broad-based Community Organizing” at The Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought, June.
- 2019 “Organizing Race” at The Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, March.
- 2018 “Sacred Value, Moral Horror and Resembling God in Robert Adams’ *Finite and Infinite Goods*.” at Tennessee Philosophical Association, October.
- 2018 “Black Liberation as Political Expectation,” at Harvard Divinity School and Science, Religion and Culture *Ways of Knowing* Conference, October.
- 2017 “Organizing Sacred Value” at McGill University Center for Research on Religion Graduate Conference, McGill University, September.
- 2017 “Organic Intellectuals and Moral Exemplars to the Church” at Mid-Atlantic Region of American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, January.
- 2017 “A Politics of Grieving: Organizing Practices Rooted in Augustinian Virtue” at Princeton Theological Seminary Graduate Theology Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary, January.
- 2016 “Posturing toward a Social Eschatology: Race, Property, and Embodied Expectations” at Duke Graduate Theology Conference, Duke University, October.

Web-Based and Popular

- 2022 “Attuning the Church, Debating What Lies Beyond Racial Capitalism” *Political Theology Network* Book Symposium on Jonathan Tran’s *Asian Americans and the Spirit of Racial Capitalism*, 6 January 2022.
- 2021 “What About Religion? Christian Politics are of Sacred Value in Polarized Times,” Essay for Unity and American Democracy Project at Vanderbilt University, 12 July 2021.
- 2021 “Church, Power, and Liturgy in the *¡Presente!* Litany,” *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Kyle Lambelet’s *¡Presente! Nonviolent Politics and the Resurrection of the Dead*, 12 July 2021.
- 2020 “Introduction: Enchantments and Romantics,” *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Eugene McCarragher’s *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity*, 1 December 2020.
- 2020 “How do Christians Practice Democracy?,” on Luke Bretherton’s *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy. Marginalia*, an imprint of the LA Review of Books, 28 February 2020.
- 2019 “Introduction” *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Gary Dorrien’s *Social Democracy in the Making: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism*, August.

- 2019 "Introduction: Social Ethics and Social Practice in Hegel," *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Molly Farneth's *Hegel's Social Ethics: Religion, Conflict and Rituals of Reconciliation*, July.
- 2019 "Islam, Sex and Secularism," on Joan Wallach Scott's *Sex and Secularism. Marginalia*, an imprint of the LA Review of Books, 18 January 2019.
- 2019 "Moving From the 'Is' to the 'Ought.'" *Mission Crossroads*. Spring.
- 2018 "The Praxis of Organizing by Two American Muslims," in *Political Theology*. July, <https://politicaltheology.com/islam-immigrant-communities-and-community-organizing/>
- 2015 "Theologies of Fear," in *Sojourners*, August. <https://sojo.net/articles/theologies-fear>
- 2014 "Economic Democracy: A Union Tradition." *Union Now* Fall.

Book Reviews

- Forthcoming Review of Eric Nelson, *The Theology of Liberalism: Political Philosophy and Justice of God*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, Vol. 42 No. 1.
- 2021 Review of Daniel Finn, *Consumer Ethics in a Global Economy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 41. No. 1.
- 2020 Review of Matthew Kaemingk, *Christian Hospitality and Muslims Immigration in an Age of Fear* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 40, No. 1.
- 2018 Review, *A Shared Future: Faith-Based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy* by Richard L. Wood and Brad Fulton, *Reading Religion*, May.

Invited Lectures and Public Talks

- 2022 "Christian Social Ethics for Social Justice," a month-long series at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.
- 2021 "The Social Gospel Yesterday and Today," at Idlewild Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN.
- 2020 "Interfaith Peacebuilding" at Austin Peay State University
- 2018 "Religion and Politics," at Congregation Micah in Nashville, TN.
- 2018 "The Christian Church's Call to Racial Justice," at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.
- 2017 "Grassroots Interfaith Community Organizing Against Islamophobia" at Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in Columbus, OH.
- 2016 "Peacemaking and Bridge building at the Grassroots between Muslims and non-Muslims" at Parliament of World Religions, Salt Lake City, UT.

Academic and Church Service and Certification

- 2022-Present Interim Director of the Lifelong Learning Program at Vanderbilt Divinity School
- 2020- Present Member, Academic Programs and Academic Affairs Committee at Vanderbilt Divinity School
- 2021 - Present Moderator, Committee on Leadership Excellence, Middle Tennessee Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- 2020 Online Course Development Institute, Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University
- 2018 - 2020 Member, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- 2012 - 2013 Member of Union Theological Seminary Search Committee for Systematic

2012 - 2013 Theology Faculty Member
Member of writing team for General Assembly Committee on Interfaith and Ecumenical Relations Interfaith Stance for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Member of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Young Adult Presbyterians and Multifaith Cohort.

Professional Experience

2020 - 2020 **Wendland Cook Program in Religion at Justice at Vanderbilt University**
Senior Research Fellow

2012 - 2015 **Religions for Peace USA**
Associate Director, Executive Director

2011 - 2013 **Faith and Culture Center**
Project Coordinator

2010 - 2011 **Communities Organized for Public Service / Metro Alliance**
Community Organizer

Professional Memberships

Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought
American Academy of Religion
Society of Christian Ethics
Social Ethics Network of the PC(USA)
Fellowship of Protestant Ethics

Languages

Spanish (Advanced, reading, writing and speaking), German (Intermediate, reading)

Academic References

Gary Dorrien

Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary in NYC
and Professor of Religion at Columbia University
Email: gdorrien@uts.columbia.edu

Eric Gregory

Professor of Religion, Princeton University
Email: gregory@Princeton.edu

Joerg Rieger

Distinguished Professor of Theology, Cal Turner Chancellor's Chair of Wesleyan
Studies, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Founding Director of the Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice
Email: j.rieger@vanderbilt.edu

C. Melissa Snarr

Associate Professor of Ethics & Society, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Email: melissa.snarr@Vanderbilt.edu